

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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O R 011451Z OCT 76
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9420
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

UNCLAS MOSCOW 15511

USIA FOR IMV/D, IEU; STATE FOR EUR/SOV; LENINGRAD FOR P&C

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: OGEN UR
SUBJECT: VTR-FIRST DEBATE

REF: (A) USIA 27887 (B) USIA 29239

1. AS REPORTED IN TELECON WITH DESK OFFICER 27 SEPTEMBER, VTR AND SPECIAL RUSSIAN AUDIO TAPES RECEIVED PROMPTLY, HAND CARRIED BY OFFICIAL VISITOR ON PAA 44, 26 SEPTEMBER. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE FOR THIS METHOD OF SHIPMENT. AS OF NOON 1 OCTOBER, LENINGRAD HAD NOT YET RECEIVED ITS COPY BUT MOSCOW RECEIVED SECOND COPY THROUGH REGULAR POUCH AND WILL TRANSMIT VTR TO LENINGRAD WITH STATE DEPARTMENT INSPECTION TEAM 1 OCTOBER.

2. EMBASSY HAD SERIES OF SHOWINGS AT SPASO HOUSE SEPTEMBER 28 AND 29 FOR ENTIRE AMERICAN, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY, CORRESPONDENTS AND BUSINESSMEN AND SPECIAL SHOWINGS SEPTEMBER 29 AND 30 FOR SELECTED SOVIETS. APPROXIMATELY 200 ATTENDED SHOWINGS IN ENGLISH. SOVIET EXPERTS WHO ATTENDED SCREENING VERY PLEASED WITH OPPORTUNITY TO VIEW DEBATE AND FORM FIRST-HAND IMPRESSIONS. POST WOULD CLASSIFY VTR AS EXTREMELY USEFUL; USING REFERENCED SCALE, SEVEN. WOULD ADD THAT FOREIGN DIPLOMATS AND CORRESPONDENTS RESIDING IN MOSCOW MOST APPRECIATIVE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE TAPES.

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EM SPECIAL SHOWING WAS ARRANGED FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING SOVIETS EVENING OF 30 SEPTEMBER BUT NO ONE APPEARED. REASONS VARY WHY NO ONE ATTENDED BUT IT WOULD APPEAR FROM TALKING WITH SMALL GROUP INFORMALLY INVITED BY PHONE THAT INTEREST IN SUBJECT MATTER WAS LOW AND OTHERS FROM THEIR ORGANIZATIONS MAY HAVE SEEN IT IN ENGLISH.

4. IN SPITE OF LACK OF INTEREST IN RUSSIAN AUDIO SESSION OF FIRST DEBATE, EMBASSY FEELS THAT HAVING TAPE ON HAND FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE USE IS VALUABLE ASSET. POST ALSO FEELS THAT INTEREST IN NEXT DEBATE IN PARTICULAR WILL BE GREAT AND THAT THE RUSSIAN-VERSION WILL BE IN DEMAND.

5. SPASO SETUP OF MONITORS INCLUDED THREE SETS PLACED TOGETHER ON ELEVATED STAND ARRANGED FOR 180 DEGREE VIEWING, CAPACITY 110 PERSONS. ONE MONITOR USED ALONG WITH REEL TAPE DECK FOR COORDINATING THE RUSSIAN AUDIO INTO THE SETS, HOOKED UP IN SERIES. ACTUAL SYNCHRONIZATION RUSSIAN AUDIO TO ENGLISH VERSION VTR NOT DIFFICULT. EMBASSY MERELY STOPPED VIDEO PORTION OF PROGRAM OCCASIONALLY TO ALLOW SLOWER AUDIO TAPE TO CATCH UP. THE "BREAK" ON SCREEN NOT OVERLY DETRIMENTAL TO VIEWING. NATIVE RUSSIAN-SPEAKER PRAISED QUALITY AND COMPREHENSION OF SEVERAL VOICES ON TAPE. TIME INSUFFICIENT TO SCRUTINIZE CLOSELY EXACTNESS OF TRANSLATION. EMBASSY FELT THIS DIFFICULT JOB WELL DONE IN SUCH QUICK TIME AND REQUESTS SAME FOR SUBSEQUENT FORD/CARTER DEBATES BUT NOT VICE-PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE. PLEASE CONFIRM.

6. CONSIDERING TIME REQUIRED TO RECEIVE FIRST DEBATE BY POUCH, EMBASSY FEELS NEXT VTR AND RUSSIAN AUDIO, ALSO MUST BE HAND CARRIED. PLEASE CHECK TO SEE WHO MIGHT BE COMING TO MOSCOW IMMEDIATELY AFTER 6 OCTOBER DEBATE.

7. USA INSTITUTE HAS REQUESTED PRIVATE SHOWING OF FIRST DEBATE MONDAY, 4 OCTOBER IN ENGLISH. EXPECT 50-75 SPECIALISTS TO ATTEND.

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IM OUR COMPLIMENTS TO IEU, IMV, TRANSLATORS AND OTHERS MAKING THIS TIMELY, IMPORTANT PROGRAM POSSIBLE. MATLOCK

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